THE PRINCIPLES OF *CHRISTIAN RELIGION* Explained to the Capacity of the Meaneſt.

By *T. G.* Miniſter of the Goſpel.

John 17. 3.

This is life Eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.

LONDON,

Printed by *A. M.* and are to be ſold by *Robert Boulter* at the *Turks-Head* in *Corn-hill*, over againſt the *Royal Exchange*, 1673.

THE

Principles

OF

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

EXPLAINED.

Queſt. *WHo is the maker of all things?*

Anſ. God. *Gen.* 1. 1. *Col.* 1.16. *By him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth.*

Q. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit of infinite perfection.

God is ſaid to be a *Spirit.* 1. *Negatively*, to intimate that he is not a body or material ſubſtance. 2. *Analogically*, Spirits being the moſt perfect and excellent of all created beings are the fitteſt to repreſent the incomprehenſible God to our narrow conceptions.

God is ſaid to be a *Spirit of perfection*, or *perfect ſpirit*, thereby to exclude all manner of imperfections, and including all manner of perfections and excellencies.

In that he is a Spirit of *infinite* perfection, thereby is implied, that there is no meaſure or bounds ſet to his perfection. Whereby he is diſtinguiſhed from the glorious Angels, and the ſouls of the Saints in Heaven, which though they are perfect ſpirits, yet their perfection is limited. Whereas Gods perfection is beyond all meaſure, being infinite.

Q. How many Gods are there?

A. There is one only God.

2 Cor. 8. 4. *There is none other God but one.*

Q. How many Perſons are there in the God-head?

A. Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt.

Though there be but one God in ſubſtance, and eſſence, yet there be three diſtinct Perſons ſubſiſting in that one God-head. This appeareth from Chriſts own teſtimony in *Mat.* 28. 19. Where he gives commiſſion to his Apoſtles to *teach all nations, and Baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* See likewiſe, 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. That God ſhould be one in eſſence and three in perſons, is a Myſtery not to be comprehended, yet ought to be believed, being ſo plainly revealed in the Word.

Q. How is God farther ſet forth unto us in his Word?

A. 1. By his Properties. 2. By his Works.

The Properties of God are certain excellencies attributed to him: as when he is ſaid to be Eternal, Almighty, Merciful Juſt, *&c.*

Q. What are the kinds of Gods Properties?

A. 1. Incommunicable. 2. Communicable.

Incommunicable properties are ſuch excellencies, which are ſo proper to God alone, as in no reſpect they can be attributed or communicated to any other. As *Eternity*, without beginning; *Immutability*, not ſubject to any change; *All-ſufficient*, not only for himſelf, but for all others; *Omnipotency*, able to do all things; *ubiquity*, to be every where preſent. Theſe and ſuch like are excellencies proper only to God, and cannot be communicated to the Creature.

Communicable properties are certain excellencies in God, communicated alſo to creatures, as *Power*, *Wiſdom*, *Holineſs*, *Juſtice*, &c. Thus *Sampſon* was a ſtrong man, *Solomon* a wiſe man, *Noah* a juſt man, *&c.* But yet there is a great difference between theſe *communicable Properties*, as they are in God, and as they are in the creature.

1. They are in God *Originally*, he is the primary fountain of them all, who hath what he hath in and from himſelf. Thus all theſe Properties in God are his very eſſence.

2. They are all in God *infinitely*, without any limits or bounds. He is *infinite* in power, wiſdom, holineſs, juſtice, *&c.* But in the Creature they are,

1. *By participation*, they receive all their excellencies from God. *what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive*, 1 Cor. 4. 7.

2. *By meaſure.* The Creature that hath the moſt, and beſt excellencies, hath but a ſtinted meaſure, *Eph.* 4. 7.

Q. To

Q. To what heads may the works of God be brought?

A. Creation and Providence.

Q. What is meant by Gods creating things?

A. A making them out of nothing.

To create is to give a being to things that never were, and that out of nothing. Which kind of making things out of nothing, is proper to God. Thereby the Lord sheweth himself to be the true God.

Q. What things did God so make?

A. All things.

This the Apostle expresly avoucheth, *Col.* 1. 16. *By him were all things Created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, Visible and Invisible.* If the excellency of many creatures, the greatness of others, the multitude of all together, be duly considered, it must needs be granted, that herein the Lord sheweth himself to be a God indeed; the only true God. None else can do the like.

Q. By what did God make all things?

A. By his Word.

Gen. 1. 3, 6. *God said, let there be light, and let there be a Firmament, and it was so.* And *Psal.* 33. 6. *By the word of the Lord were things made.* By *Gods word* we understand the manifestation of his Will. For God is said to speak not properly, but after the manner of man. Men use most commonly to express their mind and will by speaking. When God did manifest and declare his will, that such and such things should be, instantly they were; and they were so as God would have them.

Q. What was that estate wherein God made all things?

A. Very good.

The Holy Ghost expresly noteth, that at the end of every day, God took a thorow view of the particular works which he had made, and found them to be good, *Gen*, 1. 4, 10, *&c.* This is to be noted to justifie God against all the evil that is in the World. Many creatures are now evil. But as God made them, they were not so. All evil hath risen from the Creatures.

Q. Wherein consisteth the Providence of God?

A. 1. In preserving Creatures. 2. In well ordering them.

For the preserving of Creatures, if God did not sustain, and maintain them, they would soon come to nought. In this respect it is said, *In him we live, and move, and have our being*, Act. 17. 28.

Q. *What doth God by his Providence order?*

A. All things whatſoever. *Pſal.* 113. 6.

The providence of God extends as far as his Creation; as all things were created by God; ſo all things are ordered by him. As the high and great things in the higheſt Heaven. So the greateſt things on earth, (*Dan.* 2. 21. *He removeth Kings, and ſetteth up Kings.*) Yea, and the meaneſt things alſo, as *the very colour of hairs*, Mat. 5. 36.

Q. *What is that end whereunto God directeth all things?*

A. 1. His own glory. 2. His Childrens good.

Gods glory is the moſt principal and ſupreme end of all. At that he aimed in giving the firſt being to his creatures. And at that alſo he aimeth in all things that are done at any time in any place.

His childrens good is the next ſubordinate end. In regard whereof, *all things* are ſaid to *work together for their good*, Rom. 8. 28.

Q. *In what eſtate did God make man at firſt?*

A. In a very good and happy eſtate.

Gen. 1. 31. It is ſaid, *After God had made man, he overlooked every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.*

Q. *Wherein did mans happineſs eſpecially conſiſt, in which he was at firſt made?*

A. *In that he was made after the Image of God which, conſiſted in perfect knowledg, true holineſs, and righteouſneſs*, Gen. 1. 26, 27. Col. 3. 10.

Man at firſt had knowledg of all things neceſſary for the glory of God, and his own good; and was likewiſe made holy and righteous, and without ſin.

Q. *Did man always continue in that holy and happy eſtate?*

A. *No: he fell from it by tranſgreſſing that commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit*, Gen. 3. 3, *&c.*

The ſin eſpecially lay in diſobeying the command of God; which commandment he gave him for the trial of his obedience. Many may poſſibly think this ſin a light matter, and are apt to charge God with ſeverity for puniſhing man ſo ſorely for ſo ſmall an offence. But if they ſhall conſider the manifold ſins infolded in that tranſgreſſion, they muſt acknowledg it a very heinous ſin, For

1. There

1. There was *infidelity* therein in that they believed not Gods word. For though God had said, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. 2. 17. yet they believed not that they should die, but made some question and doubt thereof.

2. *Sottish credulity*, in giving credit to the Devil: God had said, *ye shall surely die.* And the Devil said, *ye shall not surely die.* Yet the Woman, and so also the Man, thorow her perswasion, gave more credit to the Devil, the Father of lyes, than to God the Father of truth.

3. *Pride and Ambition*, desiring to be as Gods. For when the Devil said, *ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil*, they were so puffed up therewith, that they transgressed.

4. *Theft.* For they took that which was none of their own, but by a special reservation kept from them. For God had expressly forbidden them to eat of that tree, *Gen.* 2. 17.

5. *Murther.* Our first Parents by eating that forbidden fruit, brought death, not only upon themselves, but upon all their posterity. Yea, as much as in them lay, they thereby implunged themselves and all their posterity into hell-fire. By these you may judg of the greatness of the sin of our first parents.

Q. Is Adams *posterity guilty of that sin?*

A. Yea, *Adams* sin is imputed to all his posterity.

By one mans disobedience many were made sinners, Rom. 5. 19. That is, by the transgression of *Adam*, the first man, *many*, even all that have or shall come from him, are justly accounted sinners.

Q. How can Adams *posterity be guilty of his sin?*

A. 1. *Adam* was a publick person in that business.

He stood not in his own room alone, but in the room of all mankind. He was the great representative of the world, so that he sinning, we sinned in and with him.

2. We were all in the Loins of *Adam* when he sinned.

And so by the Law of generation sinned in him, and in him deserved eternal condemnation.

Q. What is sin in general?

A. Sin is a transgression of the Law.

Thus doth an Apostle expresly define it, 1 *Joh.* 3.4. The Law is a manifestation of the will of God, declaring what he would have man to do, or not to do; therefore to transgres the Law, is to offend God, and to sin against his expres will.

Q. What are the kinds of sin?

A. Original and actual.

Q. What is Original sin?

A. That corruption of nature wherein all are conceived, and born.

It is the immediate effect of *Adams* first sin, and the principal cause of all other sins. In which respect it is called *Original*, because it is the spring from whence all actual sins issue and flow. Of this Original corruption did *David* speak in *Psal.* 51. 5. *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Never was any that came from *Adam* (Christ only excepted, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost) free from this sin. As every other creature receiveth the nature and disposition of their kind, and stock; thus Lyons a ravenous disposition, Dogs a doggish disposition; So the Children of sinful man a sinful disposition, an inclination rooted in their natures to all kinds of sin: which continueth in them as long as they live, and is never quite rooted out of any, so long as he continueth here on earth. Which the Lord in his wisdom hath so ordered,

1. That thereby they may be the more humbled, and kept from spiritual pride.

2. That they might have more frequent occasions of going to God by Prayer for help and strength against the working of corruption in them.

Q. What is actual sin?

A. A particular breach of Gods Law.

Q. How many ways do men fall into actual sins?

A. 1. By omitting or not doing the good which God in his Word requireth.

2. By committing or doing the evil which God in his Word hath forbidden.

3. By a sinful manner of performing that which is good.

The best duties we take in hand are exceedingly corrupted through our failing in the manner of performing them.

Q. What is the punishment of sin?

A. All curses and plagues in this life, at the end death, and after that, eternal torment in hell, *Deut.* 28. 16. 17. *Rom.* 6. 23. 2 *Thes.* 1. 8, 9.

Q. Is any man able to free himself out of that woful plight whereinto he hath implunged himself by sin?

A. Surely

A. Surely No.

2 Cor. 3. 5. *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves.* Much less can we do any thing of our selves, to free our selves from so great a misery as sin hath brought us into. *we are dead in sin,* Ephes. 2. 1. And dead men cannot raise themselves to life.

Q. Can any other creature deliver man?

A. No meer Creature.

Psalm 49. 7. *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransome for him.* This may be applied to all the Creatures in the world, to all the Saints and Angels in the world, none of them can by any means redeem his brother. So that in regard of mans own power, or in regard of succour from any meer creature, there remaineth nothing but matter of despair.

Q. Is there any means to free man out of his corrupt and miserable estate?

A. Yes, God himself hath given unto man a Saviour.

Act. 5. 31. When it was manifested that none could help, God himself gave an helper, and a Saviour unto us.

Q. Who is mans Saviour?

A. Jesus Christ.

1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*

Jesus is an Hebrew word, and signifieth a Saviour. The Angel that gave this name, addeth this reason thereof, *He shall save his people from their sins.*

The other name, *Christ*, is a Greek word, and signifieth *anointed. Jesus* shews him to be a Saviour. *Christ* an able Saviour, because anointed, that is, set apart by God and endowed with all fulness for the work of our redemption.

Q. What is Jesus Christ?

A. He is the eternal Son of God, who in the fulness of time took mans nature.

He is called, *the only begotten Son of God*, Joh. 1. 14. Which is to be understood of an eternal, and incomprehensible generation, which would rather be admired than enquired into.

Q. Why must mans Redeemer be man?

A. 1. In general that he might suffer and die for mans Redemption.

Heb.

Heb. 9. 22. *without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion of ſin:* Chriſt therefore that he might die for our Redemption, took upon him our Nature,, for as God he could not die.

2. That he might ſatisfie the Juſtice of God in the ſame nature wherein it was offended.

For the Juſtice of God did require, that ſaisfaction ſhould be made in the ſame nature which had ſinned. Man therefore having ſinned, it was requiſite that man ſhould die, for the ſatisfying Gods juſtice, and appeaſing his wrath. Whereupon ſaith the Apoſtle, *Since by man came Death, by man came the Reſurrection of the dead,* 1 Cor. 15. 21.

3. That he might feel our frailties, and from ſenſe and experience learn pity and compaſſion.

Which reaſon the Apoſtle rendreth, Heb. 2. 16,17. *He took on him the ſeed of* Abraham, *that he might be a merciful, and faithful High-Prieſt,* that is, that he might be merciful, as one man is to another. And in Heb. 4. 15. *we have not an High-Prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin.*

Q. Why muſt mans Redeemer be alſo God?

A. 1. That he might be able and ſufficient to endure that which for mans ſin he undertook.

The burden which he underwent, was the wrath of an infinite God, and there was need of a divine power to ſupport under the divine wrath. His humane nature would have been overwhelmed with the heavy weight of Gods wrath, had not the divine nature ſtrengthned and upheld it.

2. That he might vanquiſh all the enemies of our Salvation, and overcome Satan, hell and death, which no meer creature could do.

Chriſt being God, by his death he overcame death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.

3. That his obedience and ſufferings might be of an infinite price and value.

That which made the Obedience, and the Death of Chriſt to be of ſuch an infinite value was, that it was the obedience, and the death of the Son of God, of him who was God, as well as man. The Deity being one nature in the perſon of our Redeemer, an infinite dignity accompanied his perſon, and every thing that was done and ſuffered by him.

Which affords a ſingular ground of comfort to all humbled ſinners, ſenſible of their ſins, and miſery, due unto them for the

ſame;

same, in that the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ is of infinite worth and merit, far above the merit of their sins; being the death and sufferings of him who was God as well as man.

Q. What hath Christ done for our Redemption?

A. 1. He performed that obedience which we did owe to the Commandments of God.

2. He suffered that punishment which was due unto us for our sins.

The former is called Christs *active obedience*, the latter his *passive obedience*.

Christs active obedience was most absolute, and perfect; for he perfectly performed whatsoever the Law of God did require; which himself intimateth in that speech of his to *John Baptist*, (Mat. 4. 15.) *It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.* And as Christ subjected himself unto the Law, and fulfilled the same for us, in our stead, whereby he purchased eternal life and salvation for us: So likewise he suffered that punishment which was due to us for our sins, and thereby redeemed us from death and hell. Therefore saith the Apostle (*Eph.* 1. 7.) *we have redemption through his blood*; that is, through the bloody death and passion of Jesus Christ, we are redeemed from all our sins. But yet this is not so to be understood, as if we were redeemed from the curse by Christs passive obedience, and had the inheritance of glory purchased for us by his active obedience, separately considered; but by his active and passive obedience jointly considered, we are both redeemed from the curse, and entitled to glory.

Q. What Offices did Christ undertake to make us partakers of the benefit of that which Christ did and suffered?

A. Christ undertook three Offices, he became a (a) *King*, a (b) *Prophet*, and a (c) *Priest*. (*a*) Act. 5. 31. (*b*) Deut. 18. 18. (*c*) Psal. 110. 4.

Q. What are the parts of Christs Kingly Office?

A. 1. To govern his Church.

Christs governing his Church is partly *External*, and partly *Internal*.

1. *External* by his Word, wherein his Laws are revealed. And by his Officers, and Ministers, which he hath appointed to stand in his room; to whom he hath committed not only the word of reconciliation, but also the power of the Keys, or a power to put his Laws and Orders in execution.

2. Christ doth *Internally* govern his Church by his Spirit, where

whereby he ſo powerfully works upon them that he makes them willingly to ſubmit to him.

A. 2. To provide for his Church.

Chriſts providing for his Church extends to all things needful for ſoul and body, even to all *ſpiritual* and *temporal* bleſſings. He provides ſpiritual bleſſings for the ſouls of his members, by furniſhing them with all needful ſaving graces. He likewiſe provides *temporal* bleſſings for their bodies, ſo far as he ſeeth to be good for them. *The young Lyons do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord ſhall not want any good thing*, Pſal. 34. 10.

A. 3. To protect his Church.

Chriſt protects his Church and Members from all enemies. Her enemies are *Viſible* and *Inviſible*. Her Viſible enemies are all manner of wicked men. Her Inviſible enemies are the Devil and his Angels. Chriſt either keepeth theſe enemies from aſſaulting his Church, as *Gen.* 35. 5. Or weakneth their power, and reſtraineth it, as 2 *Sam.* 3. 1. Or delivereth his out of their clutches, as *Exod.* 14. 39. Or deſtroyeth their enemies, as 2 *King.* 19. 35.

Q. What is the chief work of Chriſts Prophetical Office?

A. To teach and inſtruct his Church.

Q. How doth Chriſt inſtruct his Church?

A. 1. Outwardly by his Word.

2. Inwardly by his Spirit.

Firſt, Chriſt inſtructs his Church *outwardly* by making known his Fathers will, which he did by his own mouth, when he lived upon the earth. And by his Miniſters, after his Aſcenſion into Heaven, by their Writings and Preaching.

2. Chriſt inſtructs his Church *inwardly*, by cauſing his Spirit to work with the outward Miniſtry, which he hath ordained, upon the ſouls of men. Chriſt ſpeaketh now in Miniſters, as he did in *Paul* (2 Cor. 13. 3.) though not in the ſame meaſure, yet in the ſame manner. Thus in and by thoſe ordinances which he hath preſcribed to his Church, he enlightneth the mind, mollifieth the heart, comforteth the Conſcience, yea and worketh faith, hope, love, patience, new obedience, and all other needful graces.

Q. What are the parts of Chriſts Prieſtly Office?

A. 1. Satisfaction. 2. Interceſſion.

Theſe two were the principal works of the *High-Prieſt* under the Law. One he did by offering Sacrifice. The other by entring into the moſt holy place with Incenſe. Both theſe are joined together, and applied to Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 34. *Who is he*

that

that condemneth? It is Christ that dyed, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Here we have both *Satisfaction*, and *Intercession* applyed to Christ. Satisfaction by his death, and Intercession now that he is risen again, and sitteth at the right hand of God.

Christs Sacrifice on the Cross was of such efficacy, that Gods Justice was thereby abundantly satisfied, his wrath fully pacified, yea his face and favour, and all blessings following thereon, were purchased. The death of Christ is therefore said to be a Sacrifice to God, of a sweet smelling savour, *Eph.* 5. 2. And the Church is said to be purchased thereby, *Act.* 20. 28. namely, from all that bondage under which it was, as Sin, the curse of the Law, the Wrath of God, Death, Devil, Damnation. After Christ had offered up his Life a Sacrifice unto God, and thereby made satisfaction for the sins of his Church; he was buried, and laid in the grave, to sanctifie the grave to all his members. And the third day he arose from the dead. As he himself laid down his life, so he himself took it up again. And then he ascended into Heaven, there *to make intercession for us*, which is the second part of his Priestly Office. The former was to make satisfaction: this latter to make intercession.

Christ may be said to make intercession for us two ways,

1. By a continual presenting of himself to his Father for us, *Christ*, saith the Apostle, *Heb.* 9. 24. *is entred into Heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* Christ presents himself our Sacrifice, and propitiation for our sins, whose very blood becomes our Advocate, to plead with the Father for us. *Heb.* 12. 24.

2. By manifesting his will to have all his made partakers of the vertue and benefit of his Sacrifice, *Joh.* 17. 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.*

The word *Intercession* properly signifieth supplication for another. It is attributed to Christ especially as he is now in Heaven, by way of resemblance. The resemblance may be taken from the Favourite of a King, who is always at Court, in the Kings presence, and there presents his friends petition, and intercedes for the granting thereof. Christ, the great favourite of the Lord, stands before him continually to present our supplications, and procure our acceptance.

Q. How comes Christ, and those things which he did and suffered in his own person to be ours?

A. By Faith.

Q. What is Faith?

A. True ſaving faith is a grace wrought in us by the Spirit of God, through the Miniſtry of the Word, whereby we receive Chriſt, as he is offered in the Goſpel, and reſt upon him alone for life and ſalvation.

Firſt, I ſay, *True ſaving faith is a grace wrought in us by the ſpirit of God, through the Miniſtry of the word*, becauſe that is the ordinary means whereby the Spirit of God doth work faith in our hearts. Its true, that the reading of the Scriptures, and of good books, may through Gods bleſſing be a means of working faith; but it is moſt ſure and certain, that the moſt ordinary means is the Word preached, as *Rom.*10. 17. *Faith cometh by hearing*, viz. the Word of God.

For firſt, the Law diſcovereth unto us our ſins and miſerable condition by reaſon of them: That we are utterly loſt in our ſelves, having deſerved, and are lyable to all judgments and plagues here, and eternal death and condemnation hereafter; and that we are altogether unable to free our ſelves out of this miſerable condition, whereunto we have plunged our ſelves by ſin.

And then the Goſpel ſhews us that in the fulneſs of time, Jeſus Chriſt who was the eternal Son of God, came into the world, took our nature upon him, and therein became our Surety: and as our Surety, hath taken our debts upon him; and by his obedience, and all-ſufficient Sacrifice of his own body, once offered upon the Croſs, hath made full ſatisfaction to Gods Juſtice for the ſame.

Yea, the Goſpel farther ſheweth, that God, in him, offereth grace and reconciliation, pardon of ſins here, and eternal ſalvation hereafter, to all that believe in him.

The which truth being revealed to us by the Preaching of the Word; the Spirit of God inwardly worketh in us effectual aſſent thereunto, upon which followeth an high prizing of Jeſus Chriſt above all things, an hungring and thirſting after him, and a reſolution of heart to receive him as our all-ſufficient Saviour, and to reſt upon him, and his merits alone for life and ſalvation.

And therefore it is added in the forementioned deſcription, that faith is a grace *whereby we receive Chriſt*. And indeed thereby is Chriſt made ours. For what is more our own, than that which is freely offered us, and we have received? *To receive Jeſus Chriſt*, is the ſame as to *lay hold on him*, or to *embrace* him, and *apply* him to our ſelves. But I have the rather made choice of this word *receive*, becauſe it is the very expreſſion of the Holy Ghoſt,

Ghoſt, *Joh.* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe.* This latter clauſe, *to them that believe*, is added as an explanation of the former clauſe, *As many as received him*; ſhewing what is meant by *receiving Chriſt*, namely a *believing* on him. Which two are very fitly joined together. *Believing* is added to *receiving*, to ſhew what is meant by *receiving Chriſt*. And *receiving* is added to *believing*, to ſhew what kind of faith it is, whereby Chriſt becomes ours; it is ſuch a faith, whereby we accept of and receive Chriſt with the benefits of his death and paſſion.

It follows in the deſcription of faith, How Chriſt muſt be received, namely, *as he is offered in the Goſpel.*

Chriſt is offered in the Goſpel *In all his Offices*, as *Prieſt*, *Prophet*, and *King*. And ſo he muſt be received, not only as our *Prieſt*, who hath made ſatisfaction for us, by his death upon the Croſs, and now in Heaven maketh interceſſion for us. But likewiſe as our *Prophet*, to be taught and inſtructed by him: and as our *King*, to be ruled and governed by him; and we muſt as willingly caſt our ſelves at the feet of Chriſt in ſubjection to him, as into the arms of Chriſt for ſalvation from him; we muſt be as willing to ſerve Jeſus Chriſt, as to be ſaved by him. The purpoſe of God in freeing us from the ſpiritual bondage, in which we were by nature, being this, *that we ſhould ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs, all the days of our lives.*

Vainly therefore do they deceive themſelves, who are willing to receive Chriſt as a *Redeemer*, but not as a *Ruler*: as a *Saviour*, but not as a *Lord* and *King*. Let ſuch know, that Chriſt will be a Saviour to none, to whom he is not a Lord, and King. His ſubjects alone, and none other will he ſave, for he will not part his Offices.

In the laſt place is added, *And reſt upon him alone, for the pardon of our ſins here, and for eternal life and Salvation hereafter.* This reſting on Chriſt we find is ſet forth in Scripture by ſundry Phraſes, as *a truſting in Chriſt*, Epheſ. 1. 12, And *a leaning on Chriſt*, Cant. 8. 5. A *ſtaying our ſelves upon him*, Iſa. 50. 10.

Q. What are thoſe eſpecial benefits which Believers receive from Chriſt?

A. 1. Juſtification. 2. Adoption. 3. Sanctification.

That Juſtification is by faith, the Apoſtle concludeth, *Rom.* 3. 28. *We conclude that a man is juſtified by faith, without the deeds of the Law.*

Q. What is Juſtification?

A. Juſtification is an act of Gods free grace, where-

by

by he forgives us all our ſins; and accepts of us as righteous, in and for the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt imputed to us.

That Juſtification is *an act of God free grace*, The Apoſtle expreſſeth, *Rom.* 3. 24. *Being juſtified freely by his grace.* And that God accepts us as righteous in and for the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, is clear from *Rom.* 5. 19. *As by one mans diſobedience many were made ſinners; So by the Obedience*, or righteouſneſs, *of one*, namely Chriſt, *ſhall many be made righteous:* that is, perfectly righteous, ſo as God ſhall accept them for righteous. We are juſtified not by any inherent righteouſneſs of our own, which is imperfect; but by the perfect righteouſnneſs of Chriſt imputed to us, and by God himſelf accounted ours.

Q. Which are the parts of Juſtification?

A. 1. Remiſſion of all our ſins.

2. Acceptation of us as righteous through the imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 4. 6, 7, 8.

1. Our ſins make us odious and abominable in the ſight of God: yea they make us curſed, and lyable to eternal damnation; they therefore are firſt taken away: not that they are not, or that God ſeeth them not, but in that God imputeth them not to us, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19.

2. God to make us glorious in his ſight, imputes his Sons righteouſneſs unto us, and therein accepts us. In which reſpect we are ſaid to be made righteous by Chriſts righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 5. 19. and to be made accepted in the beloved, *Epheſ.* 1. 6.

By laying theſe two parts of our Juſtification together, the tranſcendant love of Chriſt to Believers is clearly ſet out. For,

1. That which is our own, namely our ſins, becauſe they make us miſerable, he taketh from us, and layeth on himſelf, *He was made ſin for us*, 2 Cor. 5. 21.

2. That which is none of our own, becauſe without it we cannot be happy, he imputes to us, and accounts ours, and accepts of us, as if it were our own, namely, his own perfect righteouſneſs. For ſaith the Apoſtle, *we are made the righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. 21.

Q. What is Adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of Gods free-grace whereby of Children of Wrath, and of the Devil, we are made Children of God, *Joh.* 1. 12.

We are not only accounted Children, and taken into the number

number of the seed of God, but are invested with all the priviledges of the Children of God, *Rom.* 8. 17.

Q. What is Sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of Gods Spirit, whereby a justified person is by degrees renewed throughout, according to the Image of God in holiness and righteousness.

By the work of Sanctification a man is morally made a new man, and as it were, another man. *All things are become new*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. He hath new thoughts, new desires, new dispositions.

This renewing is *by degrees*; that is, by little and little, and not all at once. Indeed we are justified at once, but we are sanctified by degrees. In which respect Sanctification is compared to the *light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18.

This renewing as it is by degrees, so it is *throughout*, that is, within and without in all the faculties of the soul, and parts of the body. And that *according to the Image of God in holiness, and righteousness.* So that a Christian by the life of Sanctification lives like unto God; at least he hath an holy disposition, and inclination; and heartily endeavours so to do, to be holy, as God is holy: and as the Apostle speaketh (*Rom.* 7. 22.) *He delighteth in the Law of God after the inward man.*

Q. What other Grace doth the Gospel require besides faith?

A. Repentance, *Mat.* 3. 2. *and* 4. 17.

Q. What is Repentance?

A. Repentance is such a change of the heart, as causeth a new life.

Repentance chiefly consisteth in the change of the mind, and heart of a man. As for the new life, it is an effect and evidence of the new heart. A new heart causeth a new life. The outward change and renovation of a mans life is necessary. For Repentance must be in the whole man; and this latter giveth evidence to the truth of the former. And where the former is there the latter will also be; where there is a renewed heart, there will be a reformed life. For the soul hath an absolute command over the body; and the body is wholly governed by the soul.

Q. What are the outward Means appointed by God, for the working, and strengthning of faith, repentance, and other graces in us?

 A. The

A. The Ordinances of God, especially the Word, Sacraments and Prayer.

The Ministry of the Word is the most necessary, both for the working, and encreasing faith and other graces. That which the Apostle saith of *faith*, *That it cometh by hearing*, may be applied to all other graces, *They come by hearing the word Preached.* And to shew that by it grace also is nourished, The Apostle *Peter* exhorteth, *To desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. How doth it then concern us, as to give diligent heed to the Ministry of the Word, so to mix faith with our hearing; as by giving credence to what is delivered out of the Word of God, so by applying to our selves those truths which the Word revealeth.

Q. What is a Sacrament?

A. An holy Ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by outward signs, inward grace is signified and sealed.

So that there are three things necessary to the making up of a Sacrament.

1. An outward sign.
2. An inward or spiritual grace.
3. Christs Institution.

Q. How many Sacraments are there?

A. Two only; Baptism, and the Lords Supper.

As the Jews of old had two ordinary Sacraments, which were *Circumcision*, and the *Passeover*. So Christians now have two such as answer to them; *Baptism* to *Circumcision*, Col. 3. 11, 12. The *Lords Supper* to the *Passeover*, Luk. 22. 15, *&c.*

Q. What is Baptism?

A. A Sacrament wherein by the washing with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, our Regeneration is signified and sealed.

In that Baptism is a Sacrament of our Regeneration, it sheweth,

1. That by nature we are born in a cursed condition, we have therefore need to be new born assoon as we are born. Regeneration is so absolutely necessary to our Salvation, as without it we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, *Joh.* 3. 3.

2. That Baptism is a means of our Regeneration. Gods Spirit in and by that Ordinance worketh this great work. In which respect we are said to be *born of Water and of the Spirit*, Joh, 3. 5. yet is not every one that is baptized really and inwardly regenerated.

It

It is not the bare waſhing with water, but the working of the Spirit thereby, by which we are Regenerated. And the Spirit is a free agent, and worketh when and upon whom it liſteth, *Joh.* 3. 8.

Q. What is the outward ſign in Baptiſm?

A. Water, *Act.* 8. 36.

There is nothing ſo fit to ſet out our cleanſing from ſin, as Water, whereby that which is filthy is made clean.

Q. What is the inward thing ſignified by Water in Baptiſm?

A. The blood of Chriſt.

In relation hereunto Chriſt is ſaid to *have waſhed us from our ſins in his blood*, Rev. 1. 5. As Water hath a cleanſing vertue, ſo alſo hath Chriſts blood. *The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin*, 1 Joh. 1. 7.

Q. What is the Lords Supper?

A. A Sacrament of our ſpiritual nouriſhment, wherein by receiving Bread and Wine, according to Chriſts inſtitution, our Communion with Chriſt is repreſented, and ſealed.

The Lords Supper is added to Baptiſm, as a needful means to maintain that life of God which is begotten in us.

Q. What are the outward ſigns in the Lords Supper?

A. Bread and Wine, *Mat.* 26. 26.

Q. What doth the Sacramental bread ſet out?

A. The Body of Chriſt.

This is evident by Chriſts own words, who holding Bread in his hands, ſaith of it, *This is my body*, (Mat. 26. 26.) that is, by way of repreſentation, as if he had ſaid, This bread repreſenteth my body.

Q. What doth Sacramental wine ſet out?

A. The blood of Chriſt.

This is evident by the words of inſtitution, where Chriſt holding the Cup that had the Wine in it, and ſpeaking of the Wine therein, he ſaith, *This is my blood*, Mat. 26. 27.

Q. What is ſignified by the Miniſters breaking the bread?

A. That Chriſt was broken with torments for our ſins.

The Apoſtle in 1 *Cor.* 11. 24. Thus bringeth in Chriſt himſelf

applying that rite, *This is my body which is broken for you.*

Q. VVhat is ſignified by pouring out the VVine?

A. The ſhedding of Chriſts Blood.

Or his ſuffering unto death, and pouring forth his ſoul an offering for ſin.

Q. VVhat is ſignified by the Miniſters giving Bread and VVine to the Communicants?

A. Gods giving and offering his Son to them.

In the Sacrament God doth offer and tender Chriſt to every Communicant; yea he doth, as it were, put him into our hands with his own hands.

Q. VVhat is meant by thoſe words of the Miniſter, Take, Eat, Drink?

A. Gods will for our applying Chriſt to our ſelves.

He doth not only in a dumb ſhew make offer of Chriſt, but by his Miniſter ſpeaks unto us, and ſaith, *I will and require you to take my Son, to apply him to your ſelves, that ſo you may live by him.* What can we more expect on Gods part to move us to receive his Son?

Q. What doth the peoples taking the Bread and Wine ſet out?

A. Their receiving Chriſts Body and Blood.

That is, a ſpiritual receiving of Chriſt made man, and made a Sacrifice, to themſelves, and that by faith. For faith is that inſtrument whereby we receive Chriſt, and all his benefits as they are offered to us in the Goſpel, and ſealed unto us in the Sacrament. Faith is to the ſoul, as the hand is to the body. That which is offered to a man for his good, the hand receives to be his own. Thus God offering his Son unto us, faith firſt perſwades the heart of Gods good-will to man, and of his true intent to beſtow Chriſt upon him, and thereupon applys and takes Chriſt to himſelf, as his own. By faith the things ſignified are as truly received for the nouriſhment of the ſoul, as the ſigns are received for the nouriſhment of the Body. Faith is not only our hand to take hold of Chriſt; but our mouth to take him in, to take him down into our hearts, whereby he becomes our nouriſhment and ſtrength.

Q. What is the duty of every Communicant before he goeth to the Lords Table?

A. Examination.

1 Cor. 11. 28. *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of*

that

that bread, and drink of that Cup. Concerning this, ſee my Directions for the worthy receiving the Lords Supper, *Chap.* 24.

Q. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up our deſires to God in the name of Chriſt, for ſuch good things as he hath promiſed to give, and we ſtand in need to receive.

Prayer ſtands not in the bare uſe of a form of good words, but is *the pouring forth the ſoul, and the deſires thereof after God*, and the goods things he hath to beſtow, *Iſa.* 26. 9.

In the name of Chriſt. God heareth not ſinners, that is, coming in their own name. But ſays Chriſt himſelf, *Joh.* 15. 16. *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father, [in my name] he will give it you.* *For ſuch things as he hath promiſed to give, and we ſtand in need to receive.* Our prayers muſt be according to Gods will. And this is according to the will of God, that we ask what he hath promiſed, and what he knows we have need of. And *this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us*, 1 Joh. 5. 14.

Tne parts of Prayer are,

1. Confeſſion, or the acknowledgments of our ſins and tranſgreſſions.

2. Petition, or the asking, or craving from the hands of God ſuch things as we want.

3. Thankſgiving, or the praiſing of God for the mercies we have received.

Q. What is the eſtate of the faithful after death?

A. Their bodies ſleep expecting the reſurrection to life: and their ſouls go immediately to Heaven; and at the laſt judgment their bodies ſhall be united to their ſouls, and both enjoy everlaſting happineſs.

Q. What is the eſtate of the wicked after death?

A. Their bodies are held with the chains of death againſt the great day of Judgment: and their ſouls paſs immediately into Hell: and at the general reſurrection their bodies and ſouls ſhall be joined togegether again, and both caſt into hell-torment, which is eaſeleſs and endleſs.

The everlaſting continuance added to the intolerableneſs of the torment, exceedingly aggravateth the miſery of the damned: and diſcovereth the folly, or rather madneſs of

those who for so short a satisfaction of their filthy lusts, implunge themselves into such everlasting misery. What should not be forsaken or endured in this little time of life, to avoid that everlasting torment?

FINIS.

A Prayer to be uſed in Families both Morning and Evening, drawn up for the uſe of thoſe only who need ſuch an help.

BLeſſed Lord God, who art great and glorious in thy ſelf, good and gracious in and through thy beloved, Jeſus Chriſt. A God glorious in thy juſtice to execute vengeance upon the wilful, and impenitent; but gracious in thy mercy to paſs by the offences of poor penitent ſinners. Lord we acknowledg our great unworthineſs to come into thy preſence, to preſent our Prayers and ſupplications unto thee. But though we are unworthy, yet Chriſt is worthy. We beſeech thee therefore for his ſake to look graciouſly upon us; to paſs by our unworthineſs, and to ſtrengthen our weakneſs. To this end as we draw near unto thee, ſo be thou pleaſed to draw near unto us, enabling us to pray as with humility and ſincerity, ſo with zeal and fervency of ſpirit, and with faith in Jeſus Chriſt, looking for audience and acceptance in and thorow him. Bleſſed Lord God, we cannot but acknowledg, thou didſt at firſt create us in a bleſſed and happy eſtate, even after thine own image, endowing us with true knowledg, holineſs and righteouſneſs. But we ſoon fell from that ſtate of innocency and bleſſedneſs in the loyns of our firſt Father *Adam*; and implunged our ſelves with him into a dreadful gulf of ſin and miſery. For, O Lord, beſides the guilt of *Adams* ſin, we have contracted from him a Maſs of corruption, which hath poyſoned our very natures: polluted and defiled all the faculties of our ſouls, with all the parts and members of our bodies. So that we may more truly in regard of our ſpiritual uncleanneſs, cry out *Unclean, Unclean*, than the Leper under the Law in regard of his bodily uncleanneſs. And O Lord, to this corruption of our natures we have

added many actual ſins of our own: which as they have been heinous in their quality, ſo in their number and multitude have far exceeded the hairs of our heads, and the ſand on the Sea-ſhore, which cannot be numbred. The which we have committed through the whole courſe of our lives, from our infancy to this preſent time. So that we are now grown old in ſin, and overgrown with corruption. Though the time thou haſt allotted us here to live is very little, even as a moment to Eternity; yet alas, how little of this little have we lived to thee our God, or to the good of our own ſouls! having miſ-ſpent the greateſt part of our days in vanity and pleaſure. We have continued ignorant of thee: how much means of knowledg have we had, and yet how little knowledg have we gotten? oh how little have we done for our ſouls, or the other World? We have not conſidered what is like to become of us hereafter. How little care and pains have we taken to make ſure for Eternity? We have taken the courſe to undo our ſelves for ever. We have broken every one of thy moſt holy and righteous Laws ten thouſand, thouſand times. Yea we have ſinned againſt thy Goſpel in ſlighting the offers of grace. Though thou haſt ſent unto us Embaſſador after Embaſſador, to wooe and beſeech us to abandon our ſins, and to receive Jeſus Chriſt, yet alas, how have we ſlighted thy meſſengers, and turned a deaf ear to all thy gracious invitations! Though we are willing to take Chriſt for our Saviour, to preſerve us from hell and damnation; yet, alas, how unwilling are we to take him for our Lord and King, to yield obedience and ſubjection unto him? Lord, we cannot but acknowledg our great unthankfulneſs under thoſe manifold favours and mercies thou haſt in a plentiful meaſure conferred on us; as alſo our unprofitableneſs under thy Fatherly chaſtiſements, laid upon us in love and for our good: our diſcontentedneſs at our preſent ſtate and condition. And oh how careleſs and negligent have we been

in

in the diſcharge of the duties of our places, callings and relations! Oh the multitude of worldly and covetous thoughts, of proud and ambitious thoughts, of wicked and prophane thoughts, of wanton & unclean thoughts, yea of blaſphemous and atheiſtical thoughts that lodg in the hearts of moſt of us, and there revell it day and night! And O Lord, we cannot but acknowledg the deadneſs of our hearts, the diſtractions of our minds in the performing holy duties. We are active and lively about our vvorldly buſineſſes, but oh hovv dull and flat are vve in our religious exerciſes! praying as if vve prayed not, and hearing as if vve heard not. Lord, make us truly apprehenſive of our ſins and miſery, that vve may humble our ſelves under a ſenſe of them, and turn unto thee by true and unfeigned repentance. Turn us, O God, and vve ſhall be turned, dravv us, and vve vvill run after thee. And, O Lord, vvhileſt vve are returning unto thee, meet us, vve pray thee, in the vvay: and like a tender Father, embrace us with the arms of thy mercy. Our ſins, we confeſs, are many and heinous, yet we know and believe thy mercies are far more, and the merits of Jeſus Chriſt are far greater: and therefore we are reſolved to adventure our ſouls, as upon the mercies of thee our God, ſo upon the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, into whoſe arms we here caſt our ſelves.

Oh be pleaſed to make us partakers both of the merit of Chriſts death in freeing us from the guilt of ſin, and of the virtue of Chriſts death in freeing us from the power and dominion of ſin, that it may not rule and reign in us as formerly. Lord, work in us a loathing, and a true hatred of every ſin, eſpecially of ſuch as we have been moſt addicted to, and have moſt delighted in. To this end convince us what a folly, yea madneſs it is, for the ſhort fruition of a momentany pleaſure here, to implunge our ſelves into everlaſting burnings. Oh convert every unconverted ſoul among us; bring us to Chriſt; make us adventurers

venturers for the other world: let us be reſolved henceforth for an holy and righteous life: inſtruct us in thy ways, and teach us thy Statutes. Break the power of our ſins, ſubdue our rebellion, and make us willing to be the Lord's. Change our evil natures, and give us another ſpirit. Help us ſincerely to choſe thee as our portion; to love, and fear, and truſt in thee; and to walk humbly with thee all the days of our life. Help us to ſet our affections on things above, and no longer on this earth: let us die daily to ſin, and this World: let us exerciſe our ſelves in keeping a good conſcience towards God and men: let us work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, and give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure; and let not our labour herein be in vain. Keep us, O Lord, from our iniquities: keep us from the way of lying, from all unrighteous and unjuſt dealing, from wrath, and evil ſpeaking; let us be true, temperate, peaceable and merciful, as the children of our heavenly Father. Help us to be ſerious, and ſavory, and tender, and watchful: and hold us on conſtantly in our holy courſe to the end of our days.

In the Morning.

Lord, take us into thy keeping and protection this day; keep us from all danger, eſpecially from ſinning againſt thee. To this end make us watchful both againſt the occaſions of ſins, and temptations thereunto. Keep us we pray thee from idleneſs. And bleſs our lawful undertakings. So ſpiritualize our hearts and affections, that we may have heavenly hearts in earthly employments, and ſo may ſerve thee our God whileſt we are ſerving our own neceſſities.

In the Evening.

Lord, take us into thy keeping and protection this night; grant we may lodg in the arms of Jeſus Chriſt, that we may reſt in his boſom. Give unto us ſuch ſweet and comfortable reſt, and ſleep, that our bodies may be refreſhed, and we the better enabled to ſerve thee the next day in our ſeveral places and callings. Help us to keep always upon our hearts a deep ſenſe as of the certainty of our death, ſo of the uncertainty of the time thereof, that we may live as thoſe who believe we muſt ſhortly die.

Together

Together with us bleſs, we beſeech thee, thy whole Church; Call thine antient people the Jews; and bring in the fulneſs of the Gentiles. And particularly we pray thee for our own Nation, the Land of our Nativity: pardon the crying ſins thereof. Showr down thy bleſſings upon it both temporal and ſpiritual. In ſpecial we pray thee ſo to bleſs our Royal Soveraign, that under him we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty. Bleſs likewiſe all our Magiſtrates, and Miniſters of thy holy Word. Thou the Lord of the harveſt, ſend plenty of Labourers into thy harveſt. And, O Father of mercy, look down with the eye of pity and compaſſion upon all thine afflicted ones: let thy mercies be ſuitable to their ſeveral needs and neceſſities. Bleſs all Chriſtian families, this in particular; enrich every ſoul with all needful, ſaving grace.

Bleſſed Lord God, according to our bounden duty, we offer up our ſacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving unto thy bleſſed Majeſty, in the name and mediation of thy beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt. Bleſſing and praiſing thee for our health, wealth, food and raiment, for our preſervation from our firſt being to this preſent time. We bleſs thy name above all for that gift of gifts, the Lord Jeſus. And for the Goſpel wherein thou haſt freely offered Chriſt, with all his benefits to us. We bleſs thee for whatever grace hath been wrought in any of us by the Goſpel; and for that good hope thou haſt given us through grace. We bleſs thy name for this days protection hitherto. Add, we pray thee, this mercy, give us grace to live as in thy ſight, who ſeeſt all our ways, and art privy to every ſecret thing which we do. And now, O Lord, accept our perſons, though ſinful; and our ſervice, though full of weakneſſes, in thy beloved Son, with whom thou art well pleaſed. In whoſe name and words, we further call upon thee, ſaying, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.*

A Prayer

O Eternal and ever-living Lord God, the fountain of all bleſſing, the Father of Mercy, and God of all Conſolation. I thy poor creature altogether unworthy to appear in thy ſight, to preſent my prayer and ſupplication unto thee: do yet in the name and mediation of thy beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt proſtrate my ſelf at the footſtool of thy grace, looking for acceptance and aſſiſtance in and through him. For his ſake look graciouſly upon me, pardon my ſins, which are many and heinous. Lord, I cannot but acknowledg, that beſides the guilt of *Adams* ſin, there is in me a fountain of Corruption, which I brought with me into the World: from whence hath plentifully flowed many poyſonous ſtreams of actual tranſgreſſions, and that in evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions; which I have committed through the whole courſe of my life, from my tender infancy to this preſent time. I have been alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in me. I have walked after the courſe of this World, fulfilling the deſires of my fleſh and of my mind, minding earthly things. I have broken thy Law, neglected thy Goſpel, refuſed the offers of Chriſt, and am in great doubt that to this day there hath been no good work wrought upon me; but that I continue in the gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of iniquity. Lord, I cannot but acknowledg, I have ſhamefully abuſed the riches of thy goodneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering, which ſhould have led me to repentance; as alſo thy Fatherly corrections and chaſtiſements, laid upon me in love, and for my good; oh how little have I been bettered thereby! How do I ſpend my time and ſtrength for the getting of earthly riches; and ſatisfying my ſelf with ſenſual pleaſures, and in the mean time am careleſs of my precious and immortal ſoul? Lord, I have often for my profit and pleaſure ſake

omitted

omitted,and put off the holy exerciſes of Religion,which ought to have been performed by me; and have been exceeding dead and dull,lifeleſs and heartleſs in performing thoſe good duties I have taken in hand. I have been unfruitful under a plentiful diſpenſation of the means of grace, unthankful under thoſe favours and mercies thou haſt conferred on me,unfaithful to thoſe manifold vows and promiſes, I have made unto thee my God. Truth, Lord,my ſins are many and heinous: but this is my comfort, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave ſinners,and why not me? why not me?I acknowledg my ſelf to be a great ſinner:but yet again thy word teſtifieth,That Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave the chief of ſinners. Therefore will I not deſpair of mercy, but am reſolved to caſt my ſelf, and the burden of my ſins into the arms,and upon the ſhoulders of Jeſus Chriſt. Be pleaſed to accept of what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for me, and to accept of me in him. Turn me, O Lord, unto thee, and through him let me be reconciled unto thee. Slay the enmity,and ſubdue the rebellion of mine heart againſt thee.Waſh my polluted ſoul with his moſt precious blood , cloath my nakedneſs with the long white robe of his righteouſneſs,fill my emptineſs out of that fulneſs which is in Jeſus Chriſt. Enrich my ſoul with all needful, ſaving, ſanctifying graces. Let the faith of Gods Elect, let the love and fear of thy name be ſhed abroad in my heart. Oh that every grace may more and more flouriſh in me, & my luſts more and more wither and decay in me. Let my covetouſneſs die,let my pride, and envy,and paſſion, and ſenſuality die; let the whole body of death be deſtroyed, that I may no longer ſerve ſin.O give me grace in this my day to know the things that belong to my peace,to make a right uſe of this time of my viſitation.As Chriſt is now frequently tendred in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel as a Saviour to poor ſinners:So Lord give me grace fiducially to cloſe with the offers and tenders of him,that Chriſt may be

mine

mine, and I his. As as thou haſt been pleaſed to afford unto me, the means of grace, ſo I pray thee, help me to carry my ſelf in ſome meaſure ſuitable and anſwerable thereunto; that I may not be a ſhame, but rather a credit to Religion, and my profeſſion thereof. To this end teach me to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world. Bleſſed Lord, ſeeing without thy bleſſing it will be in vain to put forth my own pains and endeavours, I beſeech thee to help me to labour in the work of the Lord, and to crown my pains and endeavours with a bleſſing from Heaven. Make me more ſpiritual in worldly buſineſſes; and leſs worldly in ſpiritual buſineſſes. Be pleaſed to put good meditations into my mind, and holy deſires into my heart. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of my mouth, but ſuch as may adminiſter grace to the hearers. Help me to redeem time, let me not loſe one day more, ſet me preſently to work out my ſalvation with fear and trembling: let me chooſe the good part, and make ſure for eternity: let me never venture my ſoul on falſe and deceitful hopes, but let me make ſure. Good Lord, let me not be deceived, and found an hypocrite at laſt: but let me be found in the faith, that I may have rejoycing before thee in the great day.

Neither pray I for my ſelf alone, but for thy whole Church whereſoever diſperſed, or how ſoever diſtreſſed upon the face of the whole earth. In ſpecial I pray thee to bleſs this Land and Nation, with all bleſſings, both temporal and ſpiritual. And herein our Soveraign Lord and King: make him an inſtrument of bringing much glory to thy name, and much good to thy Church and people: Bleſs him in his Relations, Counſels, and Forces. Bleſs the Magiſtrates and Miniſters, with the whole people of this Land: the afflicted members of Jeſus Chriſt; let thy mercies be ſuitable to their ſeveral needs, and neceſſities. Vouchſafe to every one of us grace to live in

thy

thy fear, to die in thy favour, and to reign with thee Eternally in Heaven.

And now, O Lord, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, I bleſs and praiſe thy glorious Majeſty, for all thoſe manifold favours thou haſt in a plentiful manner conferred on my ſoul and body; for my preſervation as from manifold dangers whereunto I was ſubject, ſo from many ſins whereinto the corruption of my fleſh, and the perſwaſion of the Devil would have thrown me headlong. Bleſſed be thy name for thy good providence over me through the whole courſe of my life; thou haſt been my God from my Mothers womb, ſupplied me with all needful good things. But above all, bleſſed be thy name for that foundation of all other mercies, thy dearly beloved Son; for thoſe great things he hath done and ſuffered for me, and thoſe many good things, whereof in and through him I have hope, or am made partaker. Lord, pardon the manifold weakneſſes and imperfections which have accompanied this holy ſervice, in and through thy beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt. In whoſe name and words, I further call upon thee, ſaying, *Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever.* Amen.

F I N I S.

An Exhortation to ſtir up every Chriſtian to offer up daily a Morning, and an Evening Sacrifice of Prayer, and Praiſe unto God, in ſome ſecret and retired place.

THE duty of *Secret prayer*, is both *commanded* and *commended* to us in the Word of God.

1. It is expreſly *commanded* by our Lord and Saviour, *Mat. 6. 6. When thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut the door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.*

Our Saviour having in the foregoing verſe reproved the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, for their vain-glorious manner of praying in the *Synagogues* and *Streets*, that they might be ſeen of men; In this verſe he commands his Diſciples to withdraw themſelves out of the view of men, into ſome ſecret place, and there having ſhut the door, to offer up the Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſe unto God their heavenly Father.

The Reaſon followeth in theſe words, *Thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, will reward thee openly:* wherein is declared:

1. The notice that God taketh of our moſt ſecret Prayers, *he ſeeth them*; though God himſelf be inviſible to all, yet nothing is inviſible unto him.

2. The account that he maketh of them, is in theſe words, *he will reward thee openly.* Such account God maketh of the ſecret Prayers of his Servants, that

he will not only give what they ask, but reward them for asking.

II. We find Secret Prayer *commended* to us in Scripture, by the practice of the faithful in all ages. In *Gen.* 21. 33. we read that *Abraham* planted a Grove in *Beersheba*, and *called there on the Name of the Lord.* His planting a Grove was, as is evident from the following words, for a religious use; and most probably, that he might have a place of retirement, wherein to pour out his Soul before God. In *Gen.* 24. 63. we read of *Isaac*, that *he used to go out into the field alone, there to meditate, or pray*, for the word in the *Original* signifieth both: 'tis like he did both in some shady walk, where he enjoyed communion with God. In *Gen.* 32. 24, *&c.* we find *Jacob* at his secret Prayer, for the Text saith, that *Jacob being alone he wrestled with God in prayer, and prevailed.* So that he came off a valiant Conqueror, and thereupon had the name of *Israel* given unto him. *David* likewise was much conversant in secret Prayer. Sometime he prayed *thrice a day*, sometimes *seven times a day.* It is recorded of *Daniel, ch. 6.* 10. that in his Chamber, he *kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime*, which implieth it to be his usual practice. *Act.* 10. 9. we find *Peter* praying alone on the house-top. Questionless, he made choice of that place for the privacy thereof.

By these instances, (to which many more might be added) you may see, that it hath been the practice of Gods people in former ages, to make conscience of praying *in secret*, as well as in *publick.* Oh how should their example stir us up to a constant and conscionable performance thereof? For certainly

tainly their practice is left upon record for our learning and imitation.

But beſides theſe, we have the example of our *Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, of whom we read, *Heb.* 5. 7. that *in the days of his fleſh, he offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears:* that is, All the time wherein he lived on earth, he was very frequent in this duty of Secret Prayer, which he performed with much ardency of Spirit, implied under this Phraſe, *He offered up prayers with ſtrong crying and tears.* More particularly, we read *Mat.* 14. 22. *that having ſent away his Diſciples, he went up into a Mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.* And *Mar.* 1. 35. it is recorded, *That early in the morning, he was praying alone in a ſecret place.* And *Mark.* 6. 46. *when he had ſent away both the multitude, and his Diſciples, he departed into a mountain,* for privacy, and *there prayed.* Our Saviour was ever doing good; if he were not preaching, nor healing, he would retire himſelf into ſome ſecret place, there to pour out his Soul unto God in prayer on our behalf. One end amongſt others of Chriſt's frequent praying in ſecret was, to make himſelf a Pattern and Example unto us therein, that we might follow his ſteps, and write after his copy. And indeed what better Pattern can we have for our imitation? Other Patterns are imperfect, but Chriſt is a moſt perfect pattern. O that we were ſo wiſe as to follow him herein? which will be both our honour and our happineſs; for happy are they who tread in his ſteps.

III. *Another Argument may be taken from the Excellency of Secret Prayer*, which appeareth,

1. *Becauſe we do hereby highly honour God*, and exalt his great Name, and glorious Attributes: for thereby we acknowledge God to be,

1. *Omnipreſent*, preſent in all places, in the ſecret Cloſet, as well as in the publick Church.

2. *Omniſcient*, in that he knows, and takes notice of what is done in our moſt ſecret retirement, of our ſighs and tears that are poured out before him in our Cloſets.

3. *Omnipotent*, able to ſupply all our wants, to ſtrengthen us in all our weakneſſes, to ſupport us under all our trials and temptations.

4. *Faithful in performing what he hath promiſed.* For what do we elſe in our prayers, but crave the accompliſhment of Gods Promiſes?

2. *Becauſe God thereby glorifieth us*, vouchſafing unto us, who are but ſinful duſt and aſhes, this high and honourable priviledge, to have free acceſs unto him, as at all times, ſo in all places. It is both a great favour, and a ſingular honour to a ſubject, to have the Ear of his Prince. Oh then, with what favour and honour art thou inveſted, that haſt the Ear of the great God, who is the King of Kings! That thou haſt a free acceſs unto the glorious Throne of his Grace, to make known thy ſuits and requeſts unto him! The glorious Angels ſtand amazed at this high priviledg vouchſafed to the Saints and people of God.

3. *The Excellency of ſecret Prayer appeareth, in that therein the faithful enjoy moſt ſweet communion with God.*

God. In publick Prayers there is more communion with Saints, but in ſecret Prayers there is more communion with God. Certainly none have more experienced the grace and goodneſs of God, in cheering and comforting their hearts with the aſſurance of his love, and in melting and breaking their hearts for their ſins, than they who are moſt conſtant in their ſecret devotions.

4. *The Excellency of ſecret Prayer appeareth, in that therein, as the Saints ordinarily enjoy the ſweeteſt communion with God, ſo alſo the freeſt and fulleſt communications from God*; therein he more freely unboſomes himſelf unto them, and diſcovers ſuch ſecrets, as are not fit for others to know. The more they withdraw themſelves from men into a ſecret corner, the more the Lord unvails his face, and diſcovers his love unto them. There are none on earth, who know ſo much of the ſecrets of Gods love, of the ſecrets of his counſels, and the ſecrets of his heart, as they who moſt delight to draw near unto him in ſecret. Oh the ſweet embraces that are oftentimes betwixt God and a praying Saint! Oh the gracious diſcoveries that God makes of himſelf to a Soul in ſecret. And oh the glorious manifeſtations of his love which many Chriſtians have felt in their ſecret addreſſes! When we are upon our knees in a corner, then the Lord looks upon us with ſingular delight and complacency, and with ſpecial intimations of his love and favour. Yea then it is, that we often feel and find ſoul-raviſhing incomes from his Spirit. How highly then doth it concern us to be much with God in ſecret?

5. *The Excellency of Secret Prayer appeareth, in that it procureth a ſweetneſs and comfort upon thoſe mercies which it obtaineth.* For this is an experienced truth, *That thoſe mercies which are given in as an*

anſwer to our Prayers, are the ſweeteſt and moſt comfortable. And certainly, this is one reaſon why many find ſo little comfort in their yoke-fellows, in their children, in their eſtate, and the like, they did not ſeek them of God by ſecret Prayer, and ſo did not receive them as anſwers to their Prayers, but only from an hand of common Providence, without any ſeeking of theirs.

IV. *Another Argument may be taken from the Neceſſity of Secret Prayer:* which doth appear,

1. *From the conſideration of the manifold ſecret ſins of which every one ſtands guilty*; which are not fit to be laid open before others, but to be confeſſed in ſecret between God and a mans own Conſcience. There is no man but hath *his thorn in the Fleſh*, his beſetting ſin to pray againſt, ſome particular luſt to which he is moſt inclined and diſpoſed, which he would not willingly confeſs in the preſence of others. But in ſecret he can moſt freely pour out his whole Soul unto God, heartily bewail, and with tears confeſs his boſome and beloved ſins. And truly as thou haſt committed ſins in ſecret, ſo it is meet thou ſhouldſt mourn and weep in ſecret for them, that thy Chamber-confeſſions and Cloſet-tears may teſtifie thy godly and ſincere Repentance.

2. *The Neceſſity of Secret Prayer appeareth from the conſideration of the manifold ſecret temptations whereunto we are ſubject from our adverſary the Devil, who as a roaring Lion walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. He ſits not ſtill, but is reſtleſs to do all the miſchief he can, and is ever ſeeking all advantages againſt us: if he find us abroad about our worldly buſineſs, before we have been with God in ſecret Prayer, we are in very great danger

to

to be inſnared, and foiled by him. St. *Origen* going forth one morning out of his houſe, before he had performed his ſecret devotions, met with a ſad diſaſter: For being apprehended by ſome who conſtrained him either to offer Sacrifice to an Idol, or to ſuffer his body unnaturally to be abuſed by a Black-a-more, he choſe the former; but afterwards reflecting upon what he had done, and ſearching out the cauſe thereof, what it was that had provoked God to ſuffer him to fall into ſuch wicked hands, who drew him into ſo foul a ſin, he called to mind how he had that morning omitted his ſecret devotions, and thereupon acknowledged Gods Juſtice therein.

3. *The Neceſſity of Secret Prayer appeareth from the conſideration of the manifold caſualties whereunto we are ſubject.* For death lieth every where in wait for us, ſo that we go every moment in danger of our lives. Yea how many have riſen well in the morning, who have been found dead before the evening? and what hath befallen one, may befall another. Oh how ſad a thing will it be, to be arreſted by death, and called to the Bar of Gods Judgment, to plead guilty, or not guilty, before we have preſented our ſelves at the Throne of Grace, to ſue forth our pardon?

V. *Another Argument may be taken from the utility and profit that attends a conſcientious diſcharge of this duty*, which is manifold.

1. *Secret Prayer is one effectual, if not the principal means, whereby we attain at the hands of God all the good things whereof we ſtand in need.* It is the *privy-key* whereby we open the treaſury of all Gods bleſſings, as well ſpiritual as temporal. If thou art aſſaulted by Satan, and feareſt leſt thou ſhouldſt be

overcome by his temptations, thou maiſt (by wreſtling with God in ſecret) obtain, if not preſent deliverance, yet grace ſufficient to reſiſt them, and power at laſt to overcome them. If thou feeleſt any luſt, any corruption working and ſtirring in thee, and feareſt leſt it ſhould get the victory over theee, thou maiſt by this means obtain ſo much power and ſtrength againſt it, that it ſhall not have dominion over thee. Luſt, as ſtrong as it is, will not be able to ſtand before ſecret prayer, if it be fervent; only be carefull, that when thou haſt prayed, thou ſet a watch. And certainly one ſpecial reaſon why many Chriſtians go ſo long complaining of the working and ſtirring, yea of the power and prevalency of their corruption, is, becauſe they do not ſo often as they ſhould, wreſtle with God in ſecret for power againſt it. This is an experienced truth, That the more frequent and fervent any Chriſtian is in his Cloſet-prayer, the leſs power will ſin have over him.

2. *It is a ſpecial means to preſerve a Chriſtian from publick judgments in time of common Calamities.* For God uſually takes them into the Chamber of his Protection, who frequently betake themſelves into their Chambers of Devotion, and there bewail the ſins of the times and places in which they live. *Ezek.* 9. 4. we read, how they *who prayed and mourned in ſecret, for the abominations that were done in the midſt of the City, had a mark of ſafety ſet upon their foreheads*, whereby they were preſerved from the general deſtruction. As therefore thou wouldſt be kept ſafe in a time of common judgment, be much with God in ſecret, bewailing the ſins and iniquities of the times.

3. *It is a ſpecial means to keep up the life of grace, and power of godlineſs in mens hearts and lives.* We are not ignorant, that our bodies will decay, if they

be

be not daily refreſhed with food. And ſo will the graces of Gods Spirit in us, if they be not daily repaired, and ſuſtained by our conſtant, and fervent addreſſing our ſelves unto God in ſecret.

4. *Secret Prayer conſtantly and conſcientiouſly performed, will evidence the truth and ſincerity of grace in thee.* He is an *Iſraelite indeed*, I mean, a ſincere Chriſtian, that delights to converſe with God in ſecret. A man may go to the publick Congregation, and joyn in Family Prayer meerly in hypocriſie, to gain the applauſe, and commendation of men, to be accounted religious. But he who maketh conſcience of praying in ſecret, where none ſeeth but his heavenly Father, queſtionleſs hath an honeſt heart, deſirous to approve himſelf unto God, rather than unto men. If therefore thou contenteſt thy ſelf with frequenting the publick Prayers in the Church, and the private Prayers in the Family, but makeſt no conſcience of praying in ſecret, thou haſt juſt cauſe to ſuſpect thine hollow and hypocritical heart. *Act. 9. 11.* it is brought as a convincing argument of the reality of *Sauls* Converſion from a *Perſecutor* to be a *Profeſſor*, a choſen Veſſel unto Chriſt, *Behold he prayeth.* And indeed it is an inſeparable property of all true Saints, in all places of the world, to make conſcience of ſecret Prayer. Though all that pray in ſecret are not Gods true Saints, yet all the true Saints of God do make conſcience of praying in ſecret, *Pſal. 32. 6. For this ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee.* Every one that is godly doth and will pray unto God. As a child ſo ſoon as it is born uſually cryeth, and is known to be alive thereby: In like manner a Chriſtian, ſo ſoon as he is new born, cryeth *Abba Father*, and is thereby known to have a Spiritual life. Yea as there is no ſurer evidence of a *graceleſs Soul*, than that it is *prayer-leſs*; So there

there is no ſurer ſign of a *gracious Soul*, than that it is given to prayer. For a *ſpirit of grace*, & a *ſpirit of ſupplication*, go together; as *Zach.* 12. 10. *I will pour upon you* (ſaith the Lord) *a ſpirit of grace and ſupplication*, implying, that to whomſoever God giveth *grace*, to them he alſo giveth a *ſpirit of ſupplication*, and enables them not only to pray, but to pray *in the Spirit:* So that our Invocation of God, follows Gods Vocation of us.

I grant indeed, that many of Gods own Children, who have the work of grace wrought in their hearts, cannot expreſs themſelves in ſuch apt words and phraſes, and in ſuch manner and form as they deſire, and as they hear others do. But know, that the work of the Spirit in prayer conſiſteth not ſo much in the expreſſion of words and phraſes, as in the intention of the heart, and earneſtneſs of affection, wherein the very form & life of true prayer conſiſteth.

VI. *Another Argument may be taken from the Lords gracious acceptance and rewarding of his Childrens ſecret prayers.* Mat. 6. 6. ſaith our Saviour, *When thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly*; partly in this life, and partly in the life to come.

We have inſtances of Gods accepting and rewarding the ſecret prayers of his people in this life, by giving a gracious anſwer and return thereunto. How did God reward *Iſaac*'s ſecret prayer with a good Wife? It is obſervable, that in the very place, and at the very time, when he was meditating and praying, as for other mercies, ſo in ſpecial for a good Wife, and ſuitable yoke-fellow, *Rebecca* appears unto him; for ſaith the Text, *Gen.* 24. 63. *Iſaac went out to pray in the field, at the even-tide, and he lift up his eyes, and ſaw, and behold the Camels were coming. And Rebeccah lift up her eyes, and when ſhe ſaw Iſaac,*

ſhe

ſhe lighted off the Camel. How did the Lord reward *Hannahs* ſecret prayer for a Son; though ſhe prayed at that time in the Temple, yet ſhe prayed alone by her ſelf; for it is ſaid, 1 *Sam.* 1. 10. *That though her lips moved, yet her voice was not heard*; and in *ver.* 20. we read, *that ſoon after Hannah conceived, and bare a Son, and called his name Samuel, ſaying, becauſe I have asked him of the Lord.* Again, How did God openly reward *Daniels* ſecret Prayer in his Chamber, by delivering him from ſo great a death, and bringing ſuch a remarkable deſtruction upon his enemies?

And as the Lord doth thus openly reward the ſecret Prayers of his people here in this life; ſo will he do it much more in the life to come, *when the Saints ſhall receive according to the good they have done in the body*, 2 Cor. 5. 10. Then ſhall their ſecret devotions be made known to all the world; their groans, and their tears, which were bottled up, will be then made manifeſt that they were not loſt. So that every ſecret Prayer, put up in faith and fervency, is a ſeed ſowen, which will yield a plentiful crop another day. What though thou here ſoweſt in tears ſecretly? thou ſhalt be ſure hereafter to reap in joy openly.

Thus have I given you ſeveral Arguments to perſwade you to the performance of this too too much neglected duty of ſecret Prayer. What now remaineth, but that we ſhould all fall cloſe to the conſtant practice thereof? What though by reaſon of the fleſh, and corruption in us, we find a backwardneſs thereunto, and are thereupon loth to ſet upon the work; will not ſweet communion with God abundantly recompence all our pains therein? Did ever any repent of their ſeeking God in ſecret?

eſpecially

eſpecially if they ſought him in truth and ſincerity. Enquire of thoſe who are conſtant and conſcientious therein, they will tell you, they never found ſuch diſcoveries and manifeſtations of Gods love, ſuch raviſhing incomes of his Spirit, as in their ſecret retirements. Oh that I could ſtir up all, of all ſorts, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, to a conſcientious performance of this duty, to hold up their communion with God in ſecret. Is it not the command of Chriſt, *that thou ſhouldſt enter into thy cloſet; and having ſhut thy door, to pray to thy Father in ſecret?* And wilt thou not yield willing and cheerful obedience thereunto? *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, ſaith Chriſt, *Joh.* 14. 15. Certainly, there is little love in thy Soul unto Chriſt, if thou haſt little regard to this Commandment of his. Have not the Saints and people of God gone before thee in this duty? yea, hath not thy bleſſed Saviour made himſelf a pattern and example to thee therein? and ſhall we not be followers of him, when as the very life of a Chriſtian doth chiefly conſiſt in his conformity to Chriſt? wouldſt thou partake of Gods choiceſt mercies? wouldſt thou know, what it is to enjoy communion with God in an Ordinance? what it is to partake of the influences of his Grace, and income of his Spirit? what it is to taſte of the ſweetneſs of his love, and manifeſtation of himſelf unto the Soul? Oh then, now take up a reſolution, with the aſſiſtance of Gods grace, to ſet upon the practice of ſecret Prayer, and to be conſtant therein, not ſuffering any worldly buſineſs to juſtle out this duty, which is the moſt important buſineſs of thy Soul, and upon which the good ſucceſs of every buſineſs doth depend. Yea, know for certain, that that gain which is gotten with

the

the neglect of ſecret Prayer, will prove a curſe to thee, rather than a bleſſing.

An Exhortation to ſtir up Parents, *and* Maſters *of* Families, *to offer up daily a Morning, and an Evening Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſe unto God with their Families.*

HAving performed your *Secret Devotions* in your Cloſets, you muſt not content your ſelves therewith; but if you be *Maſters*, or *Governours* of Families, and have others under your charge, you ought likewiſe to *pray with them*. This hath been the ancient practice of Godly Families, both under the *Old* and *New Teſtament*. We read how the godly *Patriarchs* in the removal of themſelves and houſholds, took great care to build them *Altars* to call upon God, and that joyntly with their Families. Thus did *Abraham*, Gen. 12.8. So likewiſe did *Iſaac*, Gen. 26. 25. And *Jacob*, Gen. 33. 20. and 35. 1. The example of *Joſhua* is remarkable, who thus delivers his reſolution, *Joſh.* 24. 15. *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord*, namely joyntly as well as ſeverally, and ſo to pray together, as well as aſunder. In 2 *Sam.* 6. 21. It is ſaid of *David*, That after he had ſetled the *Ark*, *he returned to bleſs his houſhold*, that is, ſay Expoſitors, *To bleſs God with his Family*, and to beg Gods bleſſing on them. *Jobs* offering a Sacrifice, and praying for his Children when they were abſent, doth imply that he did the like with them, when preſent, ſeeing it is ſaid, *Job* 1. 5. *Thus did Job continually.*

In

In the *New teſtament* the Apoſtle writing to Maſters of Families concerning their duties, adjoyneth this, *Col.* 4. 2. *Continue in Prayer*, implying it to be one ſpecial duty incumbent on them to be conſtant in *Family Prayer*. Of *Cornelius* it is ſaid, *Act.* 10. 2. *That he was one who feared God with all his houſe, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway*, which implieth, that he prayed daily with his Family, or twice a day, as that phraſe importeth. By theſe examples you may ſee, it hath been the practice of pious Governours, in all ages of the world, to pray in, and with their Families. Oh that their example might awaken and ſtir up us to the performance thereof! Certainly it will be our wiſdom to follow ſuch Worthies in ſo excellent a duty.

But for your more full conviction of that obligation which lies upon you for the performance of this duty, let the following arguments be duly weighed.

Arg. 1. *The firſt Argument ſhall be drawn from that truſt that is committed to Governours of Families, who are intruſted with the Souls and with the Religion of their Families.* They have received a charge from the Lord to look diligently to all that are under them, that they duly worſhip God. In the fourth Commandment, the Maſter of the Family is charged not only to keep the Sabbath in his own perſon, but *to look to his family alſo*, Exod. 20. 10. Suitable to this charge, is the care and holy reſolution of *Joſhua*, *Joſh.* 24. 15. *I and my houſe will ſerve the Lord. Chuſe you, whom you will ſerve*, ſaith he, to the reſt of the people, *but as for me, and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* Hence it appears, that Governours of Families are to take care of the Religion, and therefore of the Souls of their Families. When a Child

is

is brought forth, when a Servant is brought into thy houſe, God ſays to thee, as the man in the Prophets Parable, 1 *King.* 20. 39. *Keep this man*, look to this Child, look to this Servant, look to their Souls; if they miſcarry, or be loſt through thy neglect, *thy life ſhall go for their lives*, *thy ſoul for their ſouls*, and ſo ſhall thy judgment be.

Arg. 2. *May be taken from the manifold benefits which uſually follow and accompany this duty of Family prayer.*

1. *It is a ſanctifying-Ordinance*, thereby the *Husband* is ſanctifiyed to the *Wife*, and the *Wife* to the *Husband*, ſo that they prove bleſſings and comforts each to other: *Children* likewiſe are bleſſed and ſanctifyed to their *Parents*, and *Servants* to their Maſters. Yea *Family Prayer* produceth Gods bleſſing upon their callings and enjoyments, upon their loſſes and croſſes, both are thereby ſanctifyed and bleſſed unto them.

2. *Family Prayer, as it is a ſanctifying Ordinance, ſo it is a ſeaſoning Ordinance*, it ſeaſons the whole houſe with the fear of God. It is recorded of *Cornelius*, Act. 10. 2. *That he was a devout man, one that feared God with all his heart, who prayed to God alwaies.* His conſtant courſe of praying with his Family, queſtionleſs did ſeaſon his whole houſe with the fear of God. As prayerleſs Families are for the moſt part deſtitute of the fear of God: So in thoſe Families where a conſtant courſe of praying is kept up, there the hearts of many are ſeaſoned with the true fear of God. As *Abraham* was a praying Maſter, ſo he had praying Servants, *Gen.* 24. 11. For Inferiors are very apt to write after the Copy of their Superiors, and to follow their example. Thus by a praying Maſter, Children and Servants are taught to pray.

3. Family Prayer conſcientiouſly performed, will bring Gods bleſſing upon your ſelves and your relations, upon your eſtate and all your undertakings. As God bleſſed *Obed-Edom* and all his houſhold for the *Arks* ſake; ſo queſtionleſs will the Lord bleſs thoſe Families wherein holy duties are faithfully performed: *For Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having the promiſe of this life that now is, as well as of that which is to come*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. whereupon ſaith the wiſe-man (*Prov.* 14. 11.) *The houſe of the wicked ſhall be overturned, but the tabernacle of the upright ſhall flouriſh.* How then can ſuch expect a bleſſing from God, either upon themſelves, or upon their relations, or upon their pains and endeavours, who do not ſet up a conſtant courſe of praying in their houſes, ſeeing it is that whereby Gods bleſſing is procured and entailed?

4. *Family Prayer is a ſpecial preſervative againſt common Calamities.* *Polanus* in his *Syntagm.* relateth, how in the year 1584, there was ſuch a terrible earth-quake, that overthrew all the houſes in the whole Town, in *Switzerland*, ſave one wherein the Maſter of the Family was at the ſame time praying with his Wife, Children and Servants. If God doth not preſerve praying Families from thoſe common Judgments and Calamities, which befall others, yet he will ſo ſanctifie thoſe calamities unto them, *that they ſhall turn to their good*, according to that gracious promiſe, *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28.

2. *Argument may be taken from the manifold miſchiefs which uſually follow and accompany the neglect of Family Prayer.*

1. *Neglect of Family Prayer is uſually accompanied with the neglect of all other religious duties*; which is found true by ſad experience. For whoever heard

that

that the Scriptures were read, or Catechiſing uſed in any Family where Prayer was omitted? ſo that Prayer-leſs houſes are as *Sepulchres*, wherein all Religion lies buried.

2. *From hence come all domeſtick brawls and contentions.* Hence it is, that the houſe is divided againſt it ſelf; Husband againſt Wife, and Wife againſt Husband; Maſter againſt Servant, and Servant againſt Maſter; Parent againſt Child, and Child againſt Parent; which would be prevented, were the Lord more duly worſhipped among them. Where God is ſerved with perfect purity, there is perfect peace. But where God is not ſerved, there is no peace, but jars and contentions, ſtrife and debate; which giveth great advantage unto Satan, the Arch-enemy of Mankind, who *like a roaring Lyon walketh about continually, ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8.

3. *From neglect of Family Prayer it is, that ſo many Families are ſo diſſolute and prophane, abounding with all manner of ſin and wickedneſs*, as *lying, ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, drinking, whoring*, and the like, as if there were a *ſeminary of little Devils*, an *houſhold of fiends*. And truly, when Families leave God in not doing the good they ſhould, God leaves them to do the evil they ſhould not. So that ſin hath there *free place*, where Gods ſervice hath *no place*. And ſins of Commiſſion do uſually follow ſins of Omiſſion; it being ordinary with God to puniſh one ſin with another; to puniſh the neglect of duty, with the committing of ſin, by leaving men ſo to themſelves, that they break forth into the committing of great and hainous ſins. A general complaint there is in theſe days of the undutifulneſs and diſobedience of Children, of the negligence and unfaithfulneſs of Servants, yea and of the looſe and

lewd lives of both in many Families, whereof if we would ſearch the true ground and cauſe, we ſhall find it rather in the *Superiors* than in the *Inferiors*. For howſoever *Inferiors* cannot be excuſed, yet queſtionleſs the fault is chiefly in *Superiors* and *Governours*, becauſe they are careleſs and negligent in the diſcharge of their duty towards them, not praying with them, nor inſtructing them as they ſhould. *For where religious duties are ſhut out of any family, there uſualy the door is ſet wide open to looſneſs and profaneſs.*

4. *The neglect of religious duties in thy family, (whereof Prayer is one of the chiefeſt) will make thee guilty of murther*, even of *Soul-murther*, which is the greateſt of all. For whereas the *Souls*, as well as the *Bodies*, of thy Children and Servants are committed to thy care and charge; if any of them ſhould periſh through thy default, thou art deeply guilty of their eternal death and damnation, and their blood will be required at thy hands. As *Jacob* was accountable to *Laban* for the loſs of every Lamb or Sheep, *at his hand was it required*: So is every Maſter of a Family accountable to God for every Soul under his roof. If any of them periſh through his default, God will require it at his hands. God will require the blood of thy Child, the blood of thy Servant at thy hands one day. If therefore you will be free from the blood of your Children and Servants, train them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and be ſure to pray for them and with them.

5. *The curſe of God hangs over all prayerleſs Families, yea it abideth in their houſes*, as the Wiſe-man expreſſeth (*Prov.* 3. 33.) *The curſe of the Lord is in the houſe of the wicked.* Howſoever they may ſeem to abound and flouriſh in all worldly wealth and riches;

ches; yet the curſe of God is upon all that they enjoy. For (as the Lord ſpeaketh by his Prophet *Malachy*, *ch.* 2. 2.) *he will curſe their bleſſings*, that is, whatſoever outward good things they did enjoy, ſhould be curſed to them.

6. *The neglect of Family Prayer expoſeth the whole houſhold to the wrath and fury of God*, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* implieth, *Jer.* 10. 25. where he ſaith, *Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that call not upon thy name*; where by the *fury of God*, is meant his wrath in the higheſt degree, his anger boiled up to the height. Oh who can abide this ſcalding wrath! And by *pouring out Gods fury*, is meant Gods inflicting his fierce wrath in the greateſt meaſure, in the higheſt degree. The words, though they are ſet down in the form of a Prayer, yet they are a *Prediction* (as well as a *Petition*) of Gods dreadful wrath and fury to be undoubtedly inflicted upon all Prayerleſs Families. For the Phrophet put up this Prayer unto God, as foreſeeing the certain ruine and deſtruction of ſuch Families as called not upon the name of the Lord: He knew that God would aſſuredly *pour out his fury* upon their Families who did not *pour out their ſouls* unto him in Prayer.

Oh then in what deſperate danger are many Families now-a-days, in which there is no praying, or very little? It may be once in a week, as on the Lords-day evening; which is the practice of too too many profeſſing Chriſtians in theſe days; who make a profeſſion of Religion, yet ſeldom pray with their Families, whoſe very practice doth condemn them; for if *Family Prayer* be not a duty incumbent upon them, why do they peform it ſometimes? If it be a duty, why do they perform it ſo ſeldom? Surely for people not to practiſe what they know to

be their duty, muſt needs prove an aggravation both of their ſins and puniſhment.

Yet alas, how is this duty little or not at all regarded by many? Oh how many Prayerleſs Families are there to be found in this Nation? who live as if there were no God to ſerve, no Soul to ſave, no Hell to be feared, no Heaven to be enjoyed. I cannot but much wonder, how ſuch can eat and drink with delight, or how they can lye down in peace, ſeeing they are liable every moment to the pouring forth of Gods fierce wrath and fiery indignation, which they know not how ſuddenly may ſeize upon them. Well may that inſcription be ſet upon their houſes, which is uſually put upon the houſes viſited with the Plague, *Lord have mercy on us*; for ſurely the Plague of God is not far from them.

Oh think of this all ye *Parents* and *Governours*, who make little or no conſcience of praying in, and with your Families; conſider it well, and lay it to heart, and thereupon reſolve for the future, with the aſſiſtance of Gods grace, to ſet upon, and keep up a conſtant courſe of Family worſhip; thus ſhall you make your houſes *Bethels*, houſes of God, and little Churches: yea thereby you ſhall not only prevent Gods fierce wrath and fury from falling upon your ſelves and Family, but likewiſe procure Gods favour both towards your ſelves and dear relations. In a word, to conclude this point, O ye Parents and Maſters of Families, as you would diſcharge your duty to God and man, as you would employ your talents, improve your gifts, increaſe your graces, exalt the name of God, prove a bleſſing to your Family, and at laſt give up your account with joy and comfort, I beſeech every one of you to take

up

up *Joshua*'s resolution, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

Having, as I hope, prevailed with you, to set upon the duty both of *Secret* and *Family Prayer*; that you may be instructed to perform them in such a manner as they may be acceptable and pleasing unto God, and beneficial to your own souls, I shall hint unto you some few Directions.

I. *Set thy self as in the sight and presence of God*; know that when thou art out of the sight of men, God is present with thee, and observeth thy whole carriage in the duty; yea not only thine outward gesture and behaviour, but the inward motions of thine heart; he is privy to every wandring and distracted thought in Prayer.

II. *Set upon the duty with the greatest reverence of God that possibly thou canst.* To that end seriously weigh and consider his surpassing excellencies, by reason whereof the blessed Angels are unworthy to stand before him, and therefore are said in Scripture to adore him with covered faces, as not able to behold his most glorious Majesty. We find it usual with the Saints, whose Prayers are recorded in Scripture, to be ample in setting forth the glorious Properties of God in the beginning of their Prayers. For which purpose note the Prayer of *Solomon*, 1 *King.* 8. 23. Of *Hezekiah*, in 2 *King.* 19. 15. Of *Daniel* ch. 9. 4.

III. *Beg the gracious assistance of Gods Spirit, which helpeth our infirmities*, and teacheth us to pray as we ought, therefore called *the spirit of grace and supplication*, Zech. 12. 10.

IV. *Put up all thy requests in the name of Christ.* Joh. 16. 23. *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* saith our Saviour, *whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*

To pray in the Name of Christ, is,

1. *To set upon the duty in confidence of assistance from Christ,* without whom we can do nothing. *Joh.* 15. 5.

2. *To set upon the duty in confidence of acceptance both of our persons and services in and through the worthiness of his merits, and efficacy of his intercession. Plutarch* in the life of *Themistocles* reports of some of the Heathens, the *Molossians* by name, that when they had any matter of consequence to ask of their King, they would get his Son, the young Prince into their arms, and so make their requests unto him. The like course should we take, when we have any request to make unto the King of Kings, carry Christ with us in the arms of our Faith; and so we shall not need to doubt of Audience and acceptance. God is so well pleased with his beloved Son, that he likewise will be pleased with all who humbly come unto him in his Name, and will deny them nothing which he knoweth to be good for them.

V. *Labour to get thine heart into the duty, and to keep it close thereunto*; which is the main thing that God looketh after in all our addresses to him. Though thy Prayers be never so well framed in regard of words, or reverently performed as to thy external gestures; yet all is, nothing, *if thy heart be not in the duty.* For Prayer is not a work of the head, or hand, or eyes only, but chiefly a work of the *heart*, and therefore called in Scripture, *the pouring out of the Soul,* 1 Sam. 1. 15. And the *pouring out of the heart, Psal.* 62. 8. And indeed, the very

very ſoul of Prayer lieth in the pouring out of the Soul before the Lord. Whenſoever therefore thou draweſt near unto God in prayer, let it be with thine heart and ſoul, otherwiſe thou canſt have no aſſurance of audience and acceptance. For as *Cyprian* ſpeaketh, *Quomodo te audiri à Deo poſtulas, &c.* How canſt thou expect the Lord ſhould hear thee, when thou heareſt not thy ſelf? Or that he ſhould regard thy prayers, when thou regardeſt not what thou prayeſt? Certainly that prayer reacheth not the heart of God, which reacheth not our own.

VI. *In all thy addreſſes unto God labour to keep away and drive out all wandring, heterogenial thoughts that come in to thy diſturbance.* I grant it is impoſſible wholly to prevent them, yet muſt thou put forth thine utmoſt care and endeavour to hinder the prevalency of them; to that end beware of nouriſhing them in thine heart with delight. Though roving thoughts, as birds, will hover about thee, in the performance of holy duties, yet ſuffer them not to lodge and neſtle in thee, but with hatred and deteſtation preſently drive them away.

For thy better help therein, take theſe few Directions.

1. *When thou art drawing near unto God in Prayer, ſtrive to caſt the world and worldly things out of thine heart*, conſecrate thy ſelf entirely unto him for that time, as one that hath nothing to do with any thing, but to enjoy communion with God in that Ordinance.

2. *Beg of God that he would by the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit reſtrain all vain and wandring imaginations*, that he would whip out of thy ſoul thoſe theeviſh

thoughts, which are like buyers and ſellers, and money-changers in the Temple of thy heart: and that by his Spirit he would keep thy mind ſo fixed on the buſineſs thou art about, that it may not be diſtracted with other cogitations, either ſinful or impertinent.

3. *In the confeſſion of thy ſins unto God, with grief of heart acknowledge thy manifold roving thoughts in prayer.* How, when thou haſt been ſpeaking unto God, thou haſt been thinking of the world, and of thy luſts; and ſo haſt often gone from God without God, from the Ordinances of God without enjoying communion with God in his Ordinances. Hereby thou wilt obtain both the pardon of the ſins of thy holy ſervices, as alſo freedom from them in great meaſure. For the truth is, a frequent confeſſion of a ſin, will make a man aſhamed thereof, and more watchful over himſelf, that he fall not into the ſame ſin again. This is implied in 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* See how both theſe follow upon our confeſſion, God is thereby moved, not only to forgive us our ſins paſt, but to cleanſe us alſo, and to keep us for the future from falling into the ſame.

4. *Keep thy mind and heart intent upon the duty of Prayer.* He that is intent with all his might in Gods ſervice, can find no leiſure to hearken to the ſuggeſtions of Satan, or parley with the world. So that the more ſerious a man is in prayer, the leſs will he be troubled with wandring thoughts.

5. *Conſider the folly of thoſe prayers which are accompanied with impertinent and diſtracted thoughts,* in that there is as much time ſpent in them, as in the moſt ſerious and fervent prayers, yet are they altogether fruitleſs and unprofitable, for both time is loſt,

loſt, and the duty loſt, and our ſouls too in danger to be loſt after all.

6. *Accuſtom thy ſelf to holy thoughts and ſavoury diſcourſes in thy daily converſation, and thereby thou wilt find thy heart in a fitter frame for prayer, and leſs ſubject to roving thoughts therein.* Shouldſt thou inure thy ſelf to vain wanton thoughts, and frothy diſcourſes at other times, they will thereby become ſo familiar to thee, that they will be ſure to accompany thee in thy moſt holy ſervices, and not eaſily be kept out or caſt off at ſuch a time.

7. *Another ſpecial help to keep thy mind from roving after other matters, when thou art converſing with God in ſecret Prayer, is, to uſe thy voice ſo as to hear thy ſelf*, where and when it may conveniently be done without oſtentation.

8. *But if notwithſtanding, that in praying, thy mind and heart hath been ſometimes taken up and poſſeſſed with vain thoughts and diſtractions, it will be a good courſe in thy ſecret prayers to repeat that again which ſo coldly and careleſly paſſed from thee*; labouring in thy repetition to repel all wandring thoughts, and to pour forth thoſe petitions again after a more hearty manner.

1. By this means thy prayers at length will be performed with greater *attention of mind*, and *intention of ſpirit*, and ſo prove more effectual for the obtaining thy deſires.

2. By impoſing this task upon thy ſelf, thou wilt become more wary and watchful over thy thoughts, leſt otherwiſe thou be enforced to continue long at that exerciſe, unto which through the depravation of thy nature, thou art ſo backward and averſe.

9. *Under weakneſs of performance ever have an eye unto Chriſt, who now ſits at Gods right hand, and having*

ving perfumed our prayers with the ſweet incenſe of his merits, preſenteth them unto his Father, and makes interceſſion for them. As it is no ſtrength or life in our prayers, that can make them meritorious with God, ſo it is no weakneſs nor diſtractions in them that we ſincerely are humbled for, and ſtrive againſt, can cauſe God to reject them, if we preſent them in the name of Chriſt, and caſt our ſelves and Prayers upon him. And know for thy comfort, that if thou doſt cordially reſiſt and mourn for thy manifold diſtractions in prayer, they will rather move Gods pity to thee, than wrath againſt thee.

VII. *Pray with all thy ſtrength; put forth the whole man in thee, with all the powers and faculties of thy ſoul.* Though thy ſtrength be but weakneſs, yet if thy ſtrength be in the duty, it will find acceptance with God. *Indeed if a man have a male in his flock, and yet offer to the Lord a corrupt thing;* I mean, if he have ſtrength and activity for the following of worldly buſineſſes, but hath no ſtrength for Gods ſervice, but thinks to put him off with weak, cold, formal devotions, what can he expect but a *curſe* inſtead of a *bleſſing*? *Mal.* 1. 14.

VIII. *Labour to live ſuitably to thy Prayers.* It is to no purpoſe to begin the day with God, and to keep the Devil company all the day after. To be a Saint in the morning, and a Swine all the day following. Having prayed againſt ſin, be ſure thou ſet a watch againſt it, avoiding the occaſions and temptations thereunto; for it is impoſſible to avoid any ſin, if we ſhun not the occaſions and temptations thereunto. Having prayed for holineſs of life, labour to live holily. Having prayed for humility, labour to walk humbly. Having prayed for ſobriety

and

and temperance, labour to live ſoberly and temperately. Having prayed in the Spirit, labour to walk in the Spirit; for to pray in the Spirit, and to walk in the fleſh, is a contradiction. The whole courſe of a Chriſtians life ſhould ſavour of his prayers. He who hath all his religion in his prayers, hath indeed no religion at all.

IX. Laſtly; having prayed, look back upon thy prayers, and let the conſideration of the manifold weakneſſes and diſtractions which have accompanied them, drive thee unto Chriſt. As this is one chief end why God ſuffers corruption to remain in his Children, even after their Regeneration, and to have an influence into all their holy Services: So it is the uſe we ſhould make thereof. And therefore ſo often as thou findeſt thine heart dead and dull, and thy mind diſtracted with wandring thoughts in prayer, ſay with thy ſelf, *Lord, what need have I of a Saviour! I ſee thou mayſt condemn me for my beſt ſervices, therefore with a diſclaiming of all my own righteouſneſs as filthy rags, I expect life and ſalvation ſolely upon the account of the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and by the merits of his Death and Paſſion.*

I ſhall cloſe this Diſcourſe with anſwering a few *Queſtions* and *Objections*.

1 *Q.* How often ſhould we pray both in ſecret and with our Families?

1 *A. Every day.* For firſt, our Saviour hath intimated ſo much unto us in his platform for Prayer, by teaching us to pray for *our daily bread*; that is, bread needful for the preſent day: And in regard we *daily* ſtand in need of bread, therefore our Saviour would have us pray *daily* for the ſame.

2. *Have*

2. *Have you not daily wants to be supplied?* Wants for your selves, and wants for your Children and Servants? Have you not daily infirmities both in your selves and families to be healed? Are you not daily subject to dangers and temptations? and do you not daily sin against God? Is it not necessary then that you daily pray unto God for the supply of all your wants, for the healing of all your infirmities, for the preventing the dangers you are daily subject unto, for the strengthning you against all your temptations, for the pardoning of all your sins? Surely our daily wants, our daily infirmities, our daily dangers, our daily temptations, and our daily sins, do all call upon us for daily prayers.

2 Q. How oft in each day are we bound to pray in secret, and with our Family?

2. *Twice at least*, namely *Morning* and *Evening*. *This is commended unto us by the Morning and Evening Sacrifice under the Law*, which we find given in command unto the *Jews*, *Exod.* 29. 38, 39. And are not *Christians* under the Gospel, as well as those under the Law, obliged to offer up their Morning and Evening Sacrifice? The day must be begun with our prayers, and ended with them. We must begin the day with prayer, to crave a blessing at Gods hand upon those things which we take in hand. For can any Christian expect Gods blessing upon his pains and endeavours without prayer? And we must end the day with God, to crave pardon for the sins committed in the former part thereof, and to give him thanks as for his manifold favours and blessings, so especially for the mercies of the day; and also to commend our selves to God the night following. How dare any lie down in their beds, before they have by prayer commended themselves unto God, and begged the pardon of their sins? Certainly, it were

were leſs danger to lie in a bed of Snakes, than to lie down in our Feather-beds with our ſins unpardoned. For if God ſhould take us out of the world that night, how ſad would our caſe be? Haply we might awake with Hell-flames about our ears. Therefore let us not fail, before we go into our beds, to offer up our Evening-ſacrifice of prayer and praiſe unto God.

3 *Q.* What time in the Morning and Evening is fitteſt for the performance of ſecret, and Family-Prayer?

A. *For this no certain rule can be preſcribed, in regard of the ſeveral occaſions which may fall out; and by reaſon of age, ſickneſs, and the like in the Governours of Families.* But it were to be wiſhed, that the *Morning-ſacrifice*, (if poſſibly) may be be-times in the Morning; that our *ſecret Devotions* be performed, ſo ſoon as we are ready, before we fall upon any worldly buſineſs; For otherwiſe we ſhall find it much harder to keep the world out of our heads, and our hearts cloſe unto the duty. And that the *Family-Devotions* be performed ſo ſoon in the morning as the whole houſhold, or the greateſt part thereof can meet together. And indeed the ſooner the better; For both reaſon and experience do teach us, that in the *Morning* our memories and ſenſes are the quickeſt, and all the faculties of our Souls at their beſt: And it were to be wiſhed that the *Evening-ſacrifice* may be *before Supper*, in regard that afterwards we are generally more heavy and ſleepy, and will find it more difficult to keep up our hearts and ſpirits in the duty.

Having thus reſolved the *Queſtions*, come we now to the *Objections* raiſed by divers both againſt ſecret and Family prayer.

Object.

*Obj.*1. Some are apt to object and ſay, they are convinced of the neceſſity of praying both in ſecret and with their Family, but they are altogether unable, they know not how to perform either.

Anſw. I would adviſe ſuch, rather to read ſome ſet form of prayer, than altogether to omit the duty; to uſe Crutches till they are able to go alone; only do not content your ſelves therewith, but labour in your own words to pour out your ſouls unto God in prayer. For your better help therein, take theſe Directions.

1. *Carefully obſerve the Prayers of others, their order, and method.*

2. *Study thine own heart, look back into thy life, call to mind thy ſins paſt, with the aggravating circumſtances of them*, and withal conſider thy ſpiritual wants, and take notice of the particular bleſſings God beſtoweth on thee; and put thy ſelf upon the duty of prayer. Confeſs thy ſins unto God, beg the pardon of them, be earneſt for ſuch graces as thou ſtandeſt in need of, likewiſe bleſs God for his manifold mercies, and forget not to implore the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, to enable thee to the duty. By uſing and exerciſing that ſmall ability to pray which thou haſt, thou ſhalt increaſe it, and grow more able to do it with comfort. Haply, thou canſt not pray with ſuch apt words and expreſſions as ſome others do, but let not that diſcourage thee; God regards not ſo much the expreſſions of thy tongue, as the ſincerity of thine heart, and earneſtneſs of affections.

*Obj.*2. Others object and ſay, the houſe in which I live is ſo ſmall, and ſo full, that I cannot find any convenient place to retire into.

*Anſw.*1. Thou canſt find a place to commit ſin ſo ſecretly that none can ſee thee, and hadſt thou

as

as great a desire to pray in secret, thou wouldst find a convenient place for the same.

2. Though thou canst not find a convenient place in the house, yet is there no out-house, nor garden nor field, into which thou mayest withdraw thy self? *Isaac* we read went into the field to meditate and pray. *Peter* to the top of the house. And certainly didst thou take delight in conversing with God in secret, thou wouldst find some convenient place either within doors, or without.

Obj. 3. Others plead the multitude of their businesses, as an excuse sometimes to put off the duty of prayer.

Answ. 1. The more and greater thy businesses are, the more and greater need thou hast of prayer, for the obtaining Gods blessing thereon; without which all thy pains and endeavour may signifie little, yea, prove successless. Assure thy self, that the time spent in prayer will prove no let, but rather a great furtherance to thy business. Oh that such worldlings would seriously consider that expression of our Saviour, *Mar.* 8. 36. *What shall it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

2. Dost thou put off prayer for the multitude of worldly businesses, thereby to encrease thy wealth? Know, that that wealth is cursed which is thus gotten. That substance which is the *price of Prayer*, may (for ought thou knowest) be the *price of blood.*

3. What business canst thou have of greater importance, than the glorifying of God, and saving of thy soul? For shame then, let not these things which concern thy spiritual estate here, and everlasting happiness hereafter, give way to thy worldly businesses; rather borrow time from them, than omit that necessary duty of Prayer.

FINIS

B L